

2018 Outstanding Achievement Award

The Association for Women in Slavic Studies is extremely pleased to announce that Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild is the winner of the 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award. One of the founders of our organization and first president, Rochelle has been a critical leader throughout its 30-year history. She is an exemplary scholar, a champion of women's studies and women's achievements, as well as a mentor to colleagues and students in the US and abroad. Moreover, her activism in the Boston feminist community and support for feminists around the world has made a significant impact. The selection committee makes this decision based not only on Dr. Ruthchild's long-standing service and scholarship but on the testimonials of multiple other senior colleagues, who often stated their astonishment that Rochelle had not received this honor already. In this 30th anniversary year of AWSS, we are therefore correcting this oversight and acknowledging the numerous contributions Dr. Ruthchild has made to our field, to our profession, and to feminist communities all over the world.

Many, many senior scholars and AWSS past presidents wrote in support of Rochelle's nomination, speaking to her integral role in AWSS, her record of excellent scholarship, and her mentoring of students and colleagues, among other achievements. For one thing, without Rochelle, AWSS simply might not exist, at least not in its current incarnation. As one nominator wrote, "we think of AWSS as an organization that still functions because of the combined work of many people. While this is true, I also know as a member and past-president of AWSS that the very existence of AWSS from a logistical, financial perspective, is entirely due to the diligence of Rochelle Ruthchild since the founding of AWSS in 1988. Especially in her long-term role as Clerk (and now Investment Officer), as she has spent countless hours working on behalf of this organization, especially in such unglamorous but critical aspects as maintaining its 501-c-3 status. Rochelle's deep knowledge of AWSS history, finances, and governance has made it possible for AWSS to not only survive but thrive over the years. Another past president writes, "For Rochelle, the purpose was not merely to keep AWSS viable, but most important of all, to support "For Rochelle, the purpose was not merely to keep AWSS viable, but most important of all, to support and strengthen research and scholarship in women's and gender studies." Thus, there was always a larger purpose to the sometimes tedious work of filling out the paperwork and monitoring the budget.

Equally important is Rochelle's role in the founding of AWSS. As one supporter wrote: "Having defended a dissertation on 'The Russian Women's Movement, 1859-1917' in 1976 at a time when few in the Slavic field were engaged in research, writing, and teaching on Slavic women's history and literature, Rochelle was instrumental in creating the first network of scholars pursuing an interest in Russian women's history. A roundtable on 'Retrieving Russian Women' at the 1986 AAASS convention in which Rochelle participated attracted an audience of at least 30 people. When many of those in attendance expressed a desire to keep in touch and exchange ideas, it was decided to form a Women's Studies Caucus that would meet at the annual AAASS convention. People wishing to join the group were asked to contact Rochelle. This initiative was followed by the founding of AWSS at the AAASS convention in Boston in 1987; Rochelle, as a founding member, was its president from 1988 to 1990, and has been a member and clerk of the

AWSS Board of Directors from 1990 to the present [currently under the honorary title of Investment Officer]. At one time or another, she has participated in just about all AWSS's programs and committees and has been a longtime staunch advocate for advancing the status of women in the Slavic profession, especially encouraging and mentoring younger scholars."

Rochelle has produced some of the most important work on Russian feminists, has influenced scholars and students around the world, and is widely considered to be the world's leading authority on the topic. That work first appeared in countless seminal articles and book chapters. Her award-winning book, *Equality and Revolution: Women's Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905-1917* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), is a landmark in women's studies, challenging Soviet (and other left-wing) dismissals of feminism as inherently bourgeois with her close analysis of a successful class-diverse women's movement emerging in early twentieth-century Russia. (If only Aleksandra Kollontai could have read Rochelle's monograph....) Rochelle has continued her trenchant revision of implicitly misogynist Soviet "women's history" with her individual and comparative studies of such political figures as Anna Filosofova, Nadezhda Stasova, and Maria Trubnikova; her survey of feminist publications and publishers in prerevolutionary Saint Petersburg; and her analysis of feminist dissidents' activism in the late Brezhnev period. Dr. Ruthchild's scholarly corpus is extraordinary in its intelligent revisionist zeal. Her productivity is also remarkable in light of the fact that she never benefited from the perks of a tenure-track position, with regular sabbaticals and financial support for field research and conference attendance.

Rochelle has also been the major book reviewer in Russian women's and gender studies in the prestigious *Women's Review of Books* and is an editor of *Aspasia*, the first journal dedicated to Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian women's and gender studies. In 2008 Rochelle was the plenary speaker at the conference in St. Petersburg celebrating the centenary of the First All-Women's conference and since that time has served in that function many a time, including at the AWSS Conference in Alexandria in 2017.

Given her positions at Norwich University and Union Institute and University, where she spent most of her career between 1981 and 2007, she did not train her own graduate students in the field of Russian women's history. Rather, she mentored generations of scholars in the U.S. and Russia with generosity and patience, without collecting much (or any) institutional visibility. Because Rochelle is someone interested in results and not titles. She simply wants to share her passion and her insights with anyone and everyone who will have them. One recommender was at the 2008 St. Petersburg conference and "witnessed firsthand the adoration and respect that our Russian colleagues have for Rochelle. It is clear that she had reached out to all of them as a mentor, giving them advice about how to navigate the challenges of introducing their work to academics in the West and encouraging them to present their work at AAASS, now ASEEES. In addition, Rochelle spearheaded a campaign within AWSS to raise money to help some of our Russian and Ukrainian colleagues to come to ASEEES and to travel within Russia itself to attend scholarly conferences." Such commitment to the education and professional development of scholars, combined with her patience and generosity, is a rare find in our professional world.

More recently, Rochelle's service has extended into new areas. She co-coordinates a working group on gender, socialism and post-socialism at Harvard's Davis Center and continues to work in various capacities (grant writer, fundraiser, producer) on the 888 Women's History Project, which financed the excellent documentary, *Left on Pearl: Women Take Over 888 Memorial Drive, Cambridge*, and publicizes the history of feminist activists in 1970s Cambridge.

Finally, all those who know Rochelle are struck by her deep and broad learning, her warmth, kindness, and generosity, and her passionate commitment to feminism and social justice. Suffice it to say, we could go on for many more pages to recount the seemingly endless list of ways in which Rochelle has made a difference in our field and in our lives through her scholarship, mentoring, and service to AWSS and many other causes. For now, this brief account will have to suffice.

Respectfully submitted,

AWSS Outstanding Achievement Award Committee:

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